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In the name of God the Beneficent and Merciful

"ISLAM"

AS THE RELIGION OF HUMANITY

"Islam" is the name by which the religion preached by the Holy Prophet Mohamed is called. Islam is as wide in its conception as humanity itself according to Quran. It did not originate from the preachings of the Prophet Mohamed but it was equally the religion of the prophets who went before him. Islam was the religion of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. The latest phase of Islam appeared in the world in the advent of the Holy Prophet Mohamed.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NAME

The name "Islam" was not invented, as in the case of other religions, by those who professed it. This name is expressly given to this religion in the Holy Quran. "This day I have

perfected for you your religion and completed My favor on you, and chosen for you Islam as a religion" (5:3). Its primary significance is the "Making of peace," and the idea of "peace" is the dominant idea in Islam. A Muslim, according to the Holy Quran, is he who has made his peace with God and Man, with the Creator as well as His Creatures. Peace with God implies complete submission to His Will Who is the source of all purity and goodness, and peace with man implies the doing of good to one's fellow man; and both these ideas are briefly and beautifully expressed in Quran.

"Peace" is the greeting of one Muslim to another.

THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTIC OF ISLAM

The great characteristic of Islam is that it requires its followers to believe that all the great religions of the World that prevailed before it were revealed by God; and thus Islam laid down the basis of peace and harmony among the religions of the World.

According to the Holy Quran, all religions have Divine revelation as the common basis from which they start. The great Mission of Islam is to preach and to correct the errors which have crept into the prevailing religions on account of the length of time, or the special circumstances in the society in the stages

of its developments and last of all to meet all the spiritual and moral requirements of an ever advancing humanity.

A HISTORICAL RELIGION

Islam is beyond all doubt a historical religion and its founder a historical personage. Every event of the Holy Prophet's life can be read in the light of history, and the Holy Quran, which is the source of all the spiritual, moral and social laws of Islam, is a book absolutely unique in its preservation.

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF ISLAM

The following verses point out the essential principles which must be accepted by those who would follow the Holy Quran. "This book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to those who guard against evil; those who believe in the unseen and keep up prayer and spend benevolently out of what We have given them; and who believe in that which has been revealed to you and that which was revealed before you; and are sure of the hereafter." The five principles as indicated are a belief in God, the Great Unseen, in Divine Revelation and in the life to come and on the practical side, prayer to God and Charity in its broadest sense.

CONCEPTION OF GOD IN ISLAM

The God of Islam is the "Lord of the Worlds." Unity is the Keynote to the Conception of the Divine Being in Islam. It denies all plurality of persons in God head and any participation of any being in the affairs of the World. His attribute of Mercy reigns over all.

UNITY

The laws of nature which we find working in the Universe, Man's own nature, and the teachings of the prophets of yore, are again and again shown as giving clear indications of the Unity of the Maker.

DIVINE REVELATION

The Holy Quran recognises no limit of any kind to Divine Revelation, either in respect of time or in respect of the nationality of the individual to whom it may be granted. It regards all people as having at one time or other received Divine Revelation. It also refuses to acknowledge the incarnation of the Divine Being.

THE LIFE AFTER DEATH

Belief in a future life implies the accountability of man in another life for actions done in this life. According to Holy Quran, the next life is only a continuation of this, and death is not an interruption but a connection link, a door that opens upon the hidden reali-

ties of this life. That the state after death is a complete representation, a full and clear image, of our spiritual state in this life. Underlying this is the principle that the development of man's faculties as it takes place in this life, however unlimited, is not sealed by finality; but a much wider vista of the realms to be traversed opens out after death.

PRINCIPLES OF ACTION

In the Holy Quran are found guiding rules for the ordinary man of the world, as well as for the philosopher, and for communities in the lowest grade of civilisation and for the highly civilized nations of the world. Practicability is the Keynote of its precepts, suiting as they do the requirements of all ages and nations. It explains what are generally called duties towards God are in fact duties towards self, or duties which do not affect one's fellow beings but affect oneself. The principal duties are the keeping up of prayer, fasting for one month, and performing a pilgrimage to Mecca. And the most important one is Zakat, or the paying of the poor tax, a tax levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor, and this, together with the three principal duties towards self, form pillars of Islamic faith on its practical side.

BROTHERHOOD OF ISLAM

Mankind is but one family, according to Holy Quran. In this brotherhood all members

should treat each other as members of the same family. Holy Prophet said "No one of you is a believer in God unless he loves for his brother what he loves for himself."

REVERENCE FOR AUTHORITY

Islam requires all men to obey those who are in immediate authority over them, and thus cuts at the root of all kinds of rebellion and anarchy.

SALAT OR THE ISLAMIC PRAYER

Prayer is an outpouring of the heart's sentiments, a devout supplication to God, and a reverential expression of the soul's sincerest desires before its Maker. With a Muslim his prayer is his spiritual diet, of which he partakes five times a day.

TIMES OF PRAYER

The prayer is obligatory upon every Muslim, male or female, who has reached the age of discretion. It is said five times a day as follows:—

1. Salat-ul-fajr, or the morning prayer, is said after dawn and before sunrise.
2. Salat-uz-zuhr, or the early afternoon prayer, is said when the sun begins to decline.
3. Salat-ul-Asr, or the late afternoon prayer, when the sun is midway on its course to setting.
4. Salat-ul-Maghrib, or the sunset prayer, is said immediately after the sunset.

5. Salat-ul-Isha, or the early night prayer, is said when the red glow in the West disappears and the time extends to midnight. But it must be said before going to bed.

Note A. When a person is sick, or on a journey (or in case of rain, when the prayer is said in Congregation in a Mosque) the early afternoon and the late afternoon may be said in conjunction, and so also the sunset and early night prayers. In the case of conjunction the SUNNATS may be dropped.

Note B. Besides these five obligatory prayers there are two optional ones. The first of these is the Salat-ul-Lail, the Tahajud or the late night prayer, which is said after midnight, after being refreshed with sleep, and before dawn. The other is known as the Salat-ud-duha, and it may be said at about breakfast time. This is the time at which the two Eld prayers are said.

Note C. The service on Friday takes the place of the early afternoon prayer.

PREPARATION FOR PRAYER

Before saying prayers it is necessary to wash those parts of the body which are generally exposed. This is called Wudu or ablution. It is performed thus:—

1. The hands are cleansed, washing them up to the wrists.
2. Then the mouth is cleansed with brush or water.

3. Then the nose is cleansed within the nostrils with the water.
4. Then the face is washed.
5. Then the right arm, and after that the left arm is washed up to the elbow.
6. Then the head is wiped over with wet hands, the three fingers between the little finger and the thumb of both hands being joined together.
7. The feet are then washed up to the ankles, the right foot first and the left after. In case of sox or shoes only the wet hands may be passed over them. It is more decent, however, to take off the shoes. And it is necessary that the socks be taken off and the feet be washed about once in every twenty-four hours.

Note A. A fresh ablution is necessary only when a man has answered a call of nature or has fallen asleep.

Note B. In cases of intercourse between husband and wife, a total washing of the whole body is necessary.

Note C. When a person is sick or access cannot be had to water, what is called TAYAMMUM is performed in place of ablution or bath.

Tayammum is performed by touching pure earth with both hands and then wiping over the face with this only once, and the backs of the two hands.

SERVICE

The service consists ordinarily of two parts, one part called the Fard, to be said in Congregation, preferably in a Mosque, with an Imam leading the service; the second part, called SUNNAT, to be said alone, preferably in one's house. But when a man is unable to say his prayers in Congregation, the Fard may be said like the SUNNAT, alone. Each part consists of a certain number of RAKATS, as explained below:—

The Fajr or morning prayer consists of two Rakats (Sunnats) said alone, followed by two Rakats (fard) said in Congregation.

The Zuhr or early afternoon prayer is a longer service consisting of four, or two rakats (Sunnat) said alone, followed by four Rakats (fard) said in congregation, and followed again by two rakats (Sunnat) said alone.

In the Friday service held at the time of Zuhr, which takes the place of sabbath of some other religions, the four Rakats (fard) said in Congregation are reduced to two, but these two rakats are preceded by a sermon (Khutbah) exhorting the Muslims to goodness and showing them the means of their moral elevation and dwelling upon their national and communal welfare.

The ASR, or the late afternoon prayer, consists of four rakats (fard) said in Congregation.

The Maghrib, or the sunset prayer, consists of three Rakats (Fard) said in Congregation, followed by two rakats (Sunnat) said alone.

The Isha, or early night prayer, consists of four Rakats (Fard) said in congregation, followed by two rakats (Sunnat) said alone, again followed by three Rakats (Witr) said alone, the last of these rakats containing the well-known prayer known as Qunoot.

The Tahajjud, or late night prayer, consists of eight Rakats (Sunnat) said in twos.

The DUHA, or the before noon prayer, consists of two rakats or four Rakats.

The Id prayer consists of two (Sunnat) said in Congregation, being followed by a sermon or Khutbah, the object of which is the same as in Friday Service.

Note A. When a person is journeying the Sunnat is dropped in every one of the prayers, except the morning prayer and the four Rakats (FARD) in each of Zuhr, ASR, and the Isha prayer are reduced to two.

Note B. When there are two or more persons, they may form a congregation, one of them acting as Imam or the leader; but if the person is alone, he may say the Fard alone, as he does the Sunnat.

Two chief features of the Muslim Congregational service are that the service may be led by anyone, the only condition being that he should know the Quran better than the

others and excel others in his duties towards God and his Creatures.

Note C. Every congregational service must be preceded by an AZAN and an IQAMAT, the former being a call to prayer said in a sufficiently loud voice and the latter requiring those assembled for service to stand up in a line or in several lines if necessary.

The AZAN, or the call to prayer, consists of the following sentences, uttered in a loud voice by the Crier, standing with his face to the QIBLAH, i.e., towards Mecca, which is the centre of the Muslim world, with both hands raised to his ears:—

1. ALLAH-U AKBAR, i.e., Allah is the greatest (repeated four times).
2. ASH-HADU AL-LA-ILAHA IL AL-LAH, i.e., I bear witness that nothing deserves to be worshipped but Allah (repeated twice).
3. ASH-HADU ANNA MUHAMMA-DAR-RASUL ULLAH, i.e., I bear witness that Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah (repeated twice).
4. HAYYA'ALAS-SALAH, i.e., come to prayer (repeated twice, turning the face to the right).
5. HAYYA'ALAL-FALAH, i.e., come to success (repeated twice, turning the face to the left).
6. ALLAH-U AKBAR, i.e., Allah is the greatest (repeated twice).

7. LA ILAHA ILL-ALLAH, i.e., there is no god but Allah.

The following sentence is added in the call of morning prayer after No. 5, i.e., before the two final sentences: AS-SALAT-U KHAIR-UN MIN-AN-NAUM, i.e., prayer is better than sleep (repeated twice).

The IQAMAT is said in the same words, every sentence being said only once, and with the addition of the following sentence repeated twice before the two final sentences: QAD QAMAT-IS-SALAH, i.e., the prayer has indeed begun.

Both AZAN and IQAMAT are dispensed with in the case of ID prayers. Instead of these, repeat As-Salat-u Eid (el Fitr or Eid ud Duha) ma sit-ta-te Takbirat three times at a time for three times. In the Friday service there are generally two calls, the second being given when the IMAM is about to deliver the sermon.

Note 4.—A mosque is a building dedicated to divine service, but a service, whether alone or in congregation, may be held anywhere when necessary. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said that the whole of the earth had been made a mosque for him, indicating not only that no place stood in need of being consecrated, but also that the true servants of Allah would spread over the whole surface of the earth.

DESCRIPTION OF A RAKAT

One RAKAT is completed as follows:—

1. Both hands are raised up to the ears in a standing position, with the face towards the qiblah, i.e., Mecca, while the words ALLAH-U AKBAR (Allah is the greatest of all) are uttered, and this is called the TAKBIR. Then recite following words. Inni wajjahtu waj-hiya lillazi fatar-as-samawat-i wal-arda hanifan va ma ana min-al-mushrikin. Inna salati wa nusuki wa mahyaya wa mamati lillah-i-rabbil-alamin, la sharika lahu wa bizalika umirtu wa ana min al-Muslimin. Allahumma ant-al-maliku la ilaha illa anta, anta rabbi wa ana 'abduka zalamtu nafsi wa'taraftu bizanbi faghrli zunubi jami'an innahu la yaghfir-uz-zunuba illa anta, wahdini li-ahsan il-akhlaqi la yahdi li-ahsaniha illa anta, wasrif 'anni sayyi'ha la yasrifu 'anni sayyi'ha illa anta.

"Surely I have turned myself, being upright, to Him Who originated the heavens and the earth, and I am not of the polytheists. Surely my prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the worlds; no associate has He, and this am I commanded, and I am of those who submit. O Allah! Thou art the King, there is no god but Thou; Thou art my Lord and I am Thy servant; I have been unjust to myself, and I confess my faults, so grant me protection

against all my faults, for none grants protection against faults but Thou, and guide me to the best of morals, for none guides to the best of them but Thou." Then say: O God, I intend to pray in two (three or four, as the case may be) rakat of sunnat (or Fard as the case may be).

I—TAHRIMAH: The action explained in following paragraph.

2. Then comes QUIYAM. The right hand is placed upon the left on the navel, while the standing position is maintained and the following prayer should be recited:—

Subhana-ka Allahumma wa bi-hamd-i-ka wa tabarak-asm-u-ka wa ta'ala jadd-u-ka wa la ilaha ghair-u-ka A'uzu billahi min-ash-shaitan-ir rajim.

"Glory to Thee, O Allah! and Thine is the praise, and blessed is Thy Name and exalted is Thy Majesty, and there is none to be served besides Thee. I betake me for refuge to Allah against the accursed devil."

After this the FATIHAH, which runs as follows, is recited in the same position:—

Bismillah-ir Rahman-ir Rahim. Al-hamd u lillah i Rabbil-'alamin. Arrahman-ir-Rahim Malik i-yaum-id-din. Iyyaka na'budu wa iyyaka nasta'in. Ihdi-nas-sirat-al-mustaqim. Sirat-allazina an'amta 'alaihim ghair-il maghdub i 'alaihim wa laddaallin.

"In the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful. All praise is due to Allah, the Lord

of the worlds, the Beneficent, the Merciful; Master of the day of requital. Thee do we serve, and Thee do we beseech for help. Guide us on the right path, the path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, not of those upon whom wrath is brought down, nor of those who go astray."

At the close of the above is said AMIN—i.e., Be it so—and then any portion of the QUR-AN which the devotee has by heart is recited. Generally one of the shorter chapters at the close of the Holy Book is repeated, and the chapter termed AL-IKHLAS (Unity) is the one recommended for those who are unacquainted with the QUR-AN. This is as follows:—

Qul hu wallahu Ahad. Allah-us-Samad. Lam yalid wa lam yulad. Wa lam yakul-lahu kufuwan ahad.

Say: He, Allah, is one; Allah is He of Whom nothing is independent; He begets not, nor is He begotten; and none is like Him.

3. Then, saying ALLAH-UAKBAR (Allah is the greatest of all), the devotee lowers his head down, so that the palms of the hands reach the knees. In this position, which is called RUKU', words expressive of the Divine glory and majesty are repeated at least three times. They are the following:—

SUB-HAN-A RABB IY AL-AZIM, i.e., Glory to my Lord, the Great.

The following words may also be added or adopted instead of the above:—

SUB-HANAKA-ALLAHUMMA RABBANA WA BIHAMDIKA ALLAHUMMAGHFIR LI, i.e., Glory to Thee, O Allah, our Lord, and Thine the praise; O Allah! grant me protection.

4. After this, the standing position is assumed with the words:—

SAMI-ALLAH-U LIMAN HAMIDAH. RABBANA WA-LAK-AL-HAMD, i.e., Allah accepts him who gives praise to Him; O our Lord, Thine is the praise.

5. Then the devotee prostrates himself, the toes of both feet, both knees, both hands, and the forehead touching the ground, and the following words expressing Divine greatness are uttered at least three times in this position, which is called the SAJDAH:—

SUBHAN A RABBIYAL-A'LA, i.e., Glory to my Lord, the Most High.

The following words may also be added to the above or adopted instead:—SUBHANAKA ALLAHUMMA RABBA-NA WA BIHAMDIKA ALLAHUMMA-MAGHFIR LI, i.e., O Allah! Glory to Thee, and Thine is the praise; O Allah! grant me protection.

This is the first sajdah.

6. Then the devotee sits down in a reverential posture. This is called JALSAH.

7. This is followed by a second prostration, or the second SAJDAH, as described above under 5, with the repetition of the words there given.

8. This finishes one RAKAT. The devotee then rises and assumes a standing position for the second RAKAT, which is finished in the same manner as the first, but instead of assuming a standing posture after the second RAKAT, he kneels down in a reverential position called the QAIDAH, and with the glorification of the Divine Being combines prayers for the Holy Prophet, for the faithful, and for himself, called the TAHIYYAH, which runs as follows:—

AT TAHIYYAT U LILLAHI WAS-SALAWAT U WAT-TAYYIBAT-U. AS-SALAM U'ALAINA WA'ALA'IBAD-ILLAH-IS SALIHIN. WA ASH-HAD U AL-LA ILAH A ILL-ALLAHU WA ASH-HADU ANNA MUHAMMADAN-'ABDU-HU WA RASULUHU.

All prayers and worship rendered through words, actions, and wealth are due to Allah. Peace be on you, O Prophet, and the mercy of Allah and His blessings. Peace be on us and the righteous servants of Allah. And I bear witness that none deserves to be served but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and His Apostle.

9. If the devotee intends to say more than two RAKATS he stands, but if he has to say only two RAKATS he repeats also the following prayer of blessings for the Prophet (this prayer and the one that follows being always repeated before the final SALAM) :—

ALLAHUMMA SALLI 'ALA MUHAMMADIN WA 'ALA ALI MUHAMMADIN KAMA SALLAITA 'ALA IBRAHIMA INNAKA HAMID-UM-MAJID. ALLAHUMMA BARIK 'ALA MUHAMMADIN WA 'ALA ALI MUHAMMADIN KAMA BARAKTA 'ALA IBRAHIMA WA 'ALA ALI IBRAHIMA INNAKA HAMID-un-MAJID.

O Allah! make Muhammad and the followers of Muhammad successful, as Thou didst make Abraham and the followers of Abraham successful, for surely Thou art praised and magnified. O Allah! bless Muhammad and the followers of Abraham, for surely Thou art praised and magnified.

The following prayer should also be added to this:—

ALLAHUMMA INNI ZALAMTU NAFSI ZULMAN KASIRAN WA LA YAGHFIR-UZ-ZUNUBA ILLA ANTA, FAGHFIR LI MAGHFIRATAN MIN-'INDIKA WARHAMNI INNAKA ANT-AL-GHAFUR UR-RAHIM.

O Allah! I have been greatly unjust to myself, and none grants a protection against faults but Thou: therefore protect me with a protection from Thyself and have mercy on me; surely Thou art the Forgiving, the Merciful.

Or instead of this the following prayer may be adopted:—

RABB-IJ-'ALNI MUQIM-AS-SALATI WA MIN ZURRIYYATI RABBANA WA TAQABBAL DU'A. RABBAN-AGHFIR LI WA LI-WALIDAYYA WA LIL-MU'MININA YAUMA YAQUM-UL-HISAB.

My Lord! make me keep up prayer, and my offspring, too; Our Lord! accept the prayer; Our Lord! grant Thy protection to me and to my parents and to the faithful on the day when the reckoning will be taken.

10. This closes the service, which ends with the SALAM, or the greeting being also the greeting of the Muslims to each other. The devotee turns his head first to the right and then to the left, saying each time:—

AS-SALAMU'ALAIKUM WA RAHMAT ULLAH I, i.e., Peace be with you and the mercy of Allah.

11. Thus the service finishes, if the devotee had to say only two RAKATS; but if he had intended three or four RAKATS, then after the QAIDAH and repeating

TAHIYYAH therein he takes the standing position, again saying, ALLAH-U AKBAR, and finishes the remaining one or two RAKATS in the same manner, the last act being always kneeling in a reverential mood, saying TAHIYYAH and prayer of blessings for the Prophet, etc., and the concluding prayer to be followed by the salam.

Besides this, the devotee is at liberty to pray in any position, as the yearning of his soul leads him to, for the SALAT, or the liturgical service of Islam, is a prayer throughout. It is to be observed that in first standing up for prayer and in changing from one position to another, the devotee says ALLAH-U AKBAR, or "Allah is the greatest," and therefore it is only just that man should in all positions and places be truly submissive to Him, sitting, standing, bowing, and prostrating himself when he is called upon to do so by One Who is the Greatest of all. Only when rising from the RUK'U he says, SAMI'ALLAHU LI-MAN-HAMIDAH, i.e., "Allah accepts him who gives praises to Him," instead of ALLAH-U AKBAR.

Note.—When the prayer is said in congregation, the congregation, or those who follow the IMAM, repeat all the prayer, etc., and also the FATIHAH, but not the portions of the Quran following the FATIHAH, and when the IMAM, rising from the bowing

posture, says SAMI-ALLAH-U LIMAN HAMIDAH, the congregation say, RAB-BANA WA LAK-AL-HAMD.

12. The prayer known as the QUNUT is recited after rising from the RUKU, or immediately before assuming that position, when standing, generally only in the last of the three last RAKATS (WITR) of the ISHA prayer.

The most well known QUNUT is the following:—

ALLAHUM-MAHDINI FI MAN HADAITA WA 'AFINI FI MAN' AFAITA WA TAWALLANI FI MAN TAWALLAITA WA BARIK LI FI MA A'-TAITA'WA QINI SHARRA MA QADAITA FA-INNAKA TAQDI WA LA YUQDA 'ALAIKA INNAHU LA YAZILLU MAN WALAITA TABARAKTA RAB-BANA WA TA'ALAIT.

O Allah! guide me among those whom Thou hast guided aright, and preserve me among those whom Thou hast preserved, and befriend me among those whom Thou hast befriended, and bless me in what Thou dost grant me, and protect me from the evil of what Thou hast judged; for surely Thou judgest, and none can judge against Thee; surely he whom Thou befriendest is not disgraced. Blessed art Thou, our Lord, and Exalted.

ALLAHUMMA INNA NASTA'INUKA WA NASTAGHFIRUKA WA NU-

'MINU BIKA WA NATAWAKKALU-'ALAIKA WANUSNI'ALAIK-AL-KHAIR-A WA NASHKURU-KA WA LANAKFURU-KA WANAKHLA'U WA NATRUKU MAN YAFJURU-KA. AL-LAHUMMA IYYAKA NA'BUDU WA EYAKA NUSALLI WA NASJUDU WA ILAIKA NAS'A WA NAHFIDU WA NARJU RAHMATAKA WA NAKH-SHA 'AZABAKA INNA 'AZABAKA BIL-KUFFAR-I MULHIQ.

O Allah! we beseech Thy help, and ask Thy protection and believe in Thee, and trust in Thee, and we laud Thee in the best manner, and we thank Thee, and we are not ungrateful to Thee, and we cast off and forsake him who disobeys Thee! O Allah! Thee do we serve and to Thee do we pray and make obeisance, and to Thee do we flee, and we are quick, and we hope for Thy mercy and we fear Thy chastisement; for surely Thy chastisement overtakes the unbelievers.

The whole of the Muslim prayer is only a declaration of Divine Majesty and glory, and Divine holiness and affection, and of the entire dependence of Man on His Maker. As the body assumes every posture of humbleness and adoration the tongue gives expression to every form of Divine glory and perfection, and the heart cannot but be full of the deepest and purest emotions. What a spirit of Divine Grandeur permeates every word! What

a great reliance on God! What a noble expression of obedience to Him and willingness to have no concern with those who are not of God! What a true fear of the Diety, and fearlessness of the rest! There is no noble desire, emotion, or sentiment which has not found its expression in the above words.

FASTING

Fasting is one of those religious institutions which, though universally recognized, have had quite a new meaning introduced in them by the advent of Islam. Fasting was generally resorted to in times of sorrow and affliction, probably to appease an angry Deity. In Islam, fasting is enjoined for the moral elevation of man and for his spiritual betterment. This object is made clear in the holy Quran itself, there fasting is enjoined; *fasting is prescribed for you . . . so that you may guard against evil* (2; 183). Thus, as in prayer, the object is the purification of the soul, so that man may learn how to shun evil. The Holy Quran does not content itself with simply enjoying the doing of good and refraining from evil, but teaches man the ways by walking in which the tendency to evil in him can be suppressed and the tendency to good improved. Fasting is one of those means. Hence, fasting in Islam does not simply mean abstaining from food, but from every kind of evil. In fact, abstention from food is only a step to make a man

realise—if he can, abstain in obedience to Divine injunctions from that which is otherwise lawful for him. How much more necessary it is that he should abstain from the evil, the consequences of which must no doubt be evil. It is, in fact, like a training of the faculties of man, for as every other faculty of man requires to be trained to attain its full force, the faculty of submission to the Divine will also requires to refrain, and fasting is one of the means by which this is achieved. In addition to that, fasting has its physical advantages. It not only makes men habituated to bear hunger and thirst, and thus to accustom himself to a life of hardship, and makes him feel the hardships of poor men so that he may not be given over too much at ease, but also exercises a very good effect upon the health generally.

The subject is dealt with in the Holy Quran in the 23rd section of the 2nd chapter. The number of days on which fasts are to be kept is 29 or 30, according to the number of days of the month of *Ramadan*. Food and drink of every kind are prohibited on fast days from dawn to sunset. So also sexual intercourse. Being a lunar month the *Ramadan* falls in different seasons in different years, and accordingly the days are sometimes too lengthy in some countries for ordinary constitutions to bear

hunger and thirst during the long interval. The analogy of the sick and the traveler who are enjoined to keep fasts during other days than *Ramadan,* leads us to the conclusion that in such exceptional cases the observance of the fast may be transferred to shorter days—say to the season when from dawn to sunset would be about 15 hours, being about the longest duration of the fast in Medina or Mecca.

It may be noted that persons who suffer from constant sickness, men and women too old to bear the hardship and women who are in the family way and those who give suck are excused, but they should give away the poor man's food every day, if this is within their means. There are sayings of the Holy Prophet which expressly mention these exceptions.

ZAKAT, OR THE POOR-RATE

Every religion of the world has preached charity, but, like prayer, we find her method and regularity given to this institution, so that it has assumed in Islam a permanence which is not encountered anywhere else. Islam makes charity obligatory and binding upon all those who accept the Muslim faith. Here we have a brotherhood into which the rich cannot enter unless and until he is willing to give part of his possessions for the support of its poorer members. There is no doubt that the rich man is not here confronted with the insuperable difficulty of making the camel pass through the eye of the needle before he can enter the

kingdom of heaven, but he is subjected to a practical test which not only makes him stand on the same footing with his poorest brother, but also requires him to pay a tax—a tax which is levied on the rich for the benefit of the poor; and thus is a real brotherhood established between the rich and the poor.

The payment of the poor-rate is an injunction next in importance only to prayer. In the Holy Quran it is very often mentioned in conjunction with prayer. The zakat is, according to a saying of the Holy Prophet, *a charitable gift taken from the rich for the benefit of the poor*. Every person is RICH within the meaning of this saying who has in his possession silver or other property of the value of approximately Rs. 50, or gold of the value of about £12. No ZAKAT is, however, payable on jewels, nor on house furniture, utensils, implements, or other property or live stock in ordinary use. On all hoarded wealth within the above definition which has remained in the possession of the owner for one year, one-fortieth portion is payable into the BAIT-UL-MAL or the public treasury. In the case of immovable property, ZAKAT is paid on the income or rent that accrues there from.

As regards the expenditure of the income of ZAKAT, eight heads are mentioned in the Holy Quran (9:60):—

1. The poor.
2. The needy.

3. Those in debt.
4. Ransoming of captives.
5. The wayfarer.
6. The officials appointed in connection with the collections and expenditure of ZAKAT.
7. Those whose hearts are made to incline to truth.
8. The way of Allah.

A few words may be added to explain the above. As distinguished from the poor, the needy are those who may be able to earn their livelihood, but lack the means, as implements, etc. A person may be able to support himself, but if he is in debt his debts may be paid off from the ZAKAT fund. The captives are those who are taken prisoners in a war. A portion of the public funds must go for their release. A traveller, though in well-to-do circumstances, may sometimes stand in need of help in a strange place or country; hence a part of the ZAKAT must also be spent for the wayfarer. The sixth head of expenditure shows that ZAKAT must under all circumstances be collected and disbursed as a public fund, and the individual is not at liberty to spend ZAKAT as he likes. Officials must be appointed to collect it and manage its expenditure, and their wages must be paid out of the ZAKAT fund.

The last two heads relate to the propagation of the faith. With respect to the preaching of

a religion, there is always a class which is ready to listen, but money is needed to enable them to listen. These persons are spoken of here as those WHOSE HEARTS ARE MADE TO INCLINE TO TRUTH. FI SABIL-ILLAH, or of the cause of the religion of Islam or its defence. Under this head, therefore, ZAKAT may be spent for the propagation of the religion of Islam and to meet the objections advanced against Islam. It may be noted that this head has for the past few centuries been totally neglected by the Muslims, and the result is that there is rarely any effort made for the propagation of the holy religion of Islam.

PILGRIMAGE

Performance of the pilgrimage to Mecca is incumbent upon every Muslim once in his life, subject to the condition that he has the means to undertake the journey as well as to make provision for those dependent on him. Security of life is also a necessary condition.

The pilgrimage is performed in the month of ZULHAJ, and the pilgrim must reach Mecca before the 7th of that month. As regards the formalities to be observed during the pilgrimage, every one can easily learn them from the Mu-allim, or instructor.

The ARKAN, or principal points in connection with the pilgrimage, are: —

1. Entering upon a state of IHRAM, in which the ordinary clothes are put off and all pilgrims wear one kind of apparel, consisting of two seamless sheets, leaving the head uncovered.
2. TAWAF, or making circuits round the KABA seven times.
3. SA'Y, or running seven times between Safa and Marwa, two small hills.
4. Staying in the plain of 'ARAFAT.

It will be seen that the state of IHRAM makes all men and women stand upon one plane of equality, all wearing the same simple dress, and living in the same simple conditions. All distinctions of rank and color, of wealth and nationality, disappear there, and the king is there indistinguishable from the peasant. The whole of humanity assumes one aspect, one attitude, before its Maker, and thus the grandest and the noblest sight of human equality is witnessed in that wonderful desert plain called the ARAFAT, which truly makes a man have a true knowledge of his Creator, the word being derived from ARAFA, meaning HE CAME TO HAVE A KNOWLEDGE (of the thing) and it does give the Knowledge of all nationalities. The whole of the world is unable to present another such noble picture of real brotherhood and practical equality.

The condition of the pilgrim and the different movements connected with the pilgrimage,

the making of circuits and running to and fro, in fact represent the stage in which the worshipper is imbued with the spirit of true love of the Divine Being. That love of God which is so much talked of in other religions becomes here a reality. The fire of Divine love being kindled in the heart, the worshipper now, like a true lover, neglects all cares of the body, and finds his highest satisfaction in sacrificing his very heart and soul for the beloved ONE'S sake, and, like the true lover, he makes circuits round the house of his beloved ONE and hastens on from place to place. He shows, in fact, that he has given up his own will, and, completely surrendering himself to the Divine will, has sacrificed all his interests for His sake. The lower connections have all been cut off, and all the comforts of this world have lost their attraction for him. The pilgrimage, in fact, represents the last stage in spiritual advancement, and by his outward condition and his movements the pilgrim only announces to the whole world how all lower connections must be cut off to reach the great goal of human perfection, which can only be attained by holding true communion with the Divine Being.

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